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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 03 PORT AU PRINCE 000342

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SUBJECT: GOH AND MINUSTAH ON HSI

PORT AU PR 00000342 001.2 OF 003

Classified By: Ambassador Janet A. Sanderson, Reasons 1.4 (b) and (d)

¶1. (SBU) Summary: On February 7-8 the Coordinator for Reconstruction and Stabilization, Ambassador John Herbst, accompanied by Ambassador Sanderson and WHA/CAR Director Brian Nichols met with Prime Minister Alexis and select members of his cabinet, the UN Country Team, and NGOs currently operating in Cite Soleil to discuss the new US \$20 million dollar stabilization initiative. The meetings were very positive and everyone bought into the concept, though everyone has differing priorities and thoughts on how the money can be best spent. This was best illustrated by the GOH's presentation of their own urban revitalization plan for Cite Soleil. Common themes throughout Ambassador Herbst's meetings were the need for strong coordination, the importance of finding the proper sequencing for operations and project interventions, and the need to leverage additional resources. Next steps include securing GOH and MINUSTAH buy-in to the stabilization initiative and promoting an effective coordination mechanism that ensures flexibility and maximum impact.
End Summary.

GOH Priorities

¶2. (SBU) Minister of Public Works, Frantz Verela presented a US \$20 million urban renewal proposal for Cite Soleil focused on infrastructure rehabilitation and delivery of critical services. The first step would be to relocate vulnerable populations in the flooded and most swampy areas. (Note: the PM added that most residents were willing to relocate for a small fee, but the GOH could not do this until the gangs were neutralized as previous attempts to do this led the gangs to steal the fees and force the residents to stay put. End note.) After cleaning the canals and completing roads to link the different zones of Cite Soleil, the urban revitalization would focus on creating parks and other public spaces, a new marketplace, a municipal building, and training centers along La Saline Boulevard to reorganize the area around educational activities.

¶3. (SBU) Infrastructure is widely perceived as the key to making Cite Soleil more accessible to security and reducing the ability of the gangs to maintain control. GOH suggested that a vital first step would be to clean out the canals, which flood the neighborhood beginning every May. Secondly, the GOH and HNP DG emphasized the importance of linking roads to allow for fluid traffic, specifically linking the American road to downtown Port-au-Prince and rehabilitating some secondary and tertiary arteries. This would improve movement of commerce between markets, and improve ability of MINUSTAH and HNP to patrol.

¶4. (C) The meeting with HNP DG Andresol and his priorities for the police will be reported Septel.

Coordination is Critical

¶5. (SBU) Most GOH, UN, and NGO interlocutors emphasized the need to establish a mechanism / process to coordinate all actors involved across sectors on Cite Soleil. The new UNDP Resident Representative specified that there is no individual UN Country Team Task Force focused on Cite Soleil at this time. Although Cite Soleil will be encompassed in the overarching UN Country Team Red Zone Task Force, many felt that this structure would be too unwieldy to have meaningful coordination on Cite Soleil specifically.

¶6. (SBU) The Prime Minister highlighted that there are 150 small projects ongoing in Cite Soleil, mostly by NGOs or civil society. He stressed the importance of coordinating these and other efforts under GOH leadership to avoid competition between organizations. He also expressed interest in structuring the projects to take advantage of the comparative advantage some organizations might have in

PORT AU PR 00000342 002.2 OF 003

certain areas.

Stabilizing Cite Soleil

¶7. (C) Though meetings with UN and GOH officials underscored the need to begin establishing security before moving in with development projects, neither the UN nor the GOH provided a timeline of when and under what conditions development activities could begin; nor did they elaborate on steps being taken to ramp up their operations save for saying that continued operations to neutralize gangs and stabilize the area are critical. However, at the same time the UN Force Commander, General Luiz Carlos dos Santos Cruz, repeatedly offered to take Ambassador Herbst into Cite Soleil during his visit, a sign that he feels the security situation is becoming more stable in certain sections of the area.

¶8. It was clear, however, that PM Alexis and HNP DG Andresol did not agree on when this could happen, with Andresol thinking it would take much longer than PM Alexis estimated; no sooner than two months. On the other hand, one NGO emphasized that it was the grassroots projects in certain hot spots that allowed the community to take control of a very small area and expand from there - ensuring general project security as they went.

¶9. (C) Both GOH and UN officials suggested securing and developing Cite Soleil neighborhood by neighborhood to ensure cohesion and to allow the under-resourced HNP time to rotate sufficient officers there. The GOH identified Bois Neuf, Boston, and Brooklyn as their priority areas. Later meetings with UN Civil Affairs highlighted Boston as their immediate focus, as evident from ongoing UN operations the following week.

Securing Buy-in

¶10. (C) In each meeting it was clear that each group had their own ideas of how to best spend the US \$20 million in Cite Soleil. Establishing buy-in to the full package will be a challenge. Though the Haitians were on board with the broad idea of closely linking security and development, ministers failed to grasp that the presentation of the Minister of Public Works for the urban renewal of Cite Soleil would not replace the HSI program design and approach. Though SRSG Mulet was very positive about the program, some MINUSTAH staff expressed alternate ideas about how to promote stabilization in Cite Soleil and many of the Latin contributors may see this as a way to make their engagement more about development and less about security.

Other Items and Next Steps

¶11. (SBU) Ambassador Herbst also took the opportunity to underscore the need for strong judicial reform and strengthening by establishing standards, appointing judges and prosecutors who meet those standards, and dismissing those who don't. He added that the GOH should consider establishing reasonable fees for legal assistance so that as the GOH took in revenue they could increase salaries so that judges and prosecutors would not need to resort to corruption.

¶12. (SBU) Ambassador Herbst also emphasized the importance of the HOPE legislation and urged the GOH to address the requisite paperwork in a timely manner so that implementation could move forward.

¶13. (SBU) The PM said that as the GOH was interested in both security and development aspects of the stabilization initiative, we could continue to work together to reach a joint proposal as MINUSTAH maintains its efforts to stabilize the area. Ambassador Herbst emphasized the need to be flexible on the types of projects this initiative could

PORT AU PR 00000342 003.2 OF 003

address. The Embassy and TDY staff will follow-up with the Ministries of Planning and Public Works to share ideas and promote buy-in.

¶14. (C) Comment: This was a good introductory trip to the players and the challenges of doing business in Haiti. It was clear that the GOH has their own ideas of how to spend the US \$20 million and we will need to continue to reiterate that we need to coordinate and work together as the initiative is implemented. Also, as the costs of stabilizing and developing Cite Soleil will exceed US \$20 million beyond the short and medium term, ensuring continuity will rely upon engagement by other donors and private sector investment. In addition, it was clear in the meeting with the PM that the GOH has funding available for rehabilitation of Cite Soleil, which can be leveraged to either add-on or complement ongoing activities. End Comment.

SANDERSON